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Bharath Sriraman

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Editorial: Opening 2011's Journal Treasure Chest

Bharath Sriraman, Editor

Over the years, people have described different journal issues of *The Montana Mathematics Enthusiast*, as pulling a rabbit out of a hat, always surprising readers by its variety and content. One wishes that putting together an issue were as simple as that! Most TMME issues are planned 10-12 months in advance and require a convergence of numerous elements- first and foremost of which is a healthy submission rate. I have been proactive about promoting the journal at institutions in numerous countries I have lectured at as a visiting Professor, as well as relied on the support of collaborators and colleagues for suggesting the journal as an avenue of publication at research conferences and symposia.

In 2010 the journal received 109 manuscripts, out of which 27 were accepted for publication, 70 were rejected, 12 required reworking and resubmission. Out of the 70 manuscripts that were rejected, 9 were found inappropriate in terms of the aims and scope of the journal. Another 6 of the rejected manuscripts eventually found other outlets for publication. The acceptance rate is thus around 25%. Some editorial board members suggested increasing the frequency of the journal from 3 to 4 issues per year. However, due to very limited resources the journal is unable to do so. *The Montana Mathematics Enthusiast* is a grass roots enterprise in which the bulk of the work is done by the Editor, with help from the editorial assistant [Linda Azure], hundreds of ad-hoc reviewers, and a cadre of language checkers and copy editors scattered around the world. It operates very much like a complex system, with numerous lower order agents unknowingly acting in chorus and contributing to the end product, namely journal issues.

Instead of thinking of a journal issue as a rabbit pulled out of a hat, it is much more like an anthill requiring hundreds of hours of slow and steady work. It is also fascinating to watch articles from the journal and monographs cited in other mathematics education journals, books and conference proceedings in addition to myriad disciplines such as pure mathematics, exact sciences, history, philosophy, physics, cultural studies and even aesthetic plastic surgery! The skeptical reader can go into Google Scholar or Google Books and enter "The Montana Mathematics Enthusiast" and verify for themselves. As a testimony to the eclectic nature of the journal and its ability to publish mathematical articles of interest and quality, Princeton University Press selected Wagner's (2009) "If mathematics is a language, how do you swear in it?" (from TMME, vol6, no3) in its *The Best writing on Mathematics 2010*.

The journal continues to remain free online with the option of purchasing print copies from Information Age Publishing. The Montana Monograph series also continues to thrive and released its 11th volume entitled "*Interdisciplinarity for the 21st Century*" in the Fall, and two additional monographs are in development for release in 2011 and 2012.

I wish to thank several colleagues who have been in the art of editing longer than I have from whom I have learned a lot. First and foremost, Lyn English (Australia), the editor of *Mathematical Thinking and Learning* for teaching me to identify potential and quality in submissions; Ian Winchester (Canada), the editor of *Interchange: A Quarterly Review of Education*, and Don Ambrose (USA), the editor of *Roeper Review*, individuals from whom I have learned the art of eclectics, challenging philosophical assumptions and interdisciplinary initiatives; and last but not least Gabriele Kaiser (Germany), the editor of *ZDM-The International Journal of Education* from whom I have learned the art of patience and revision to improve quality of manuscripts, and compiling theme issues.

Indeed I feel fortunate to be able to roam in a variety of disciplinary circles and combine the editorial styles and approaches of different journals to make the journal what it is.

The current double issue that opens up 2011 is a veritable treasure chest – I will not elaborate on this and simply let the table of contents speak for itself! Not too many journals can claim a line up with articles from Hyman Bass, Reuben Hersh, Wolff-Michael Roth, Klaus Hoechsmann, Thomas O'Brien, and many other illustrious colleagues from Canada, Israel, Iran and other countries. Indeed the journal may be one of the few places where one notes a synergy between colleagues from Iran and Israel, untainted and far different from the vitriol and rhetoric of the popular media and the continuation of *Realpolitik* in the world today.

Finally, I wish to pass my condolences to family, friends and colleagues who mourn the passing of Thomas O'Brien on December 6. We hope the present article that was in the pipeline but sadly appears posthumously in this issue carries on his *Polya-esque* vision for the teaching and learning of mathematics.

I have received requests to start a Letters from Readers section in 2012 and urge those interested in seeing this happen to send their correspondence to me. I hope the 9360+ readers of the journal from 110+ countries enjoy the New Year offering of The Montana Mathematics Enthusiast.

Reference

Pitici, M. (Ed) (2011). *The Best Writing on Mathematics 2010*. Princeton University Press.